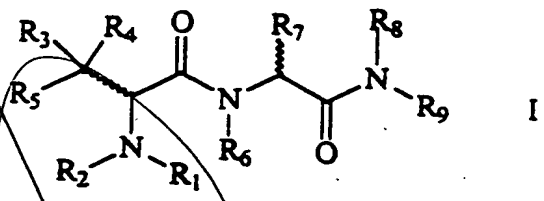
WE CLAIM:

1. A compound or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, having the formula



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wherein,

R_1 and R_2 are independently selected from the group consisting of: H, R, and ArR-, and where at least one of R_1 and R_2 is R and neither are ArR-, R_1 and R_2 together may optionally be a three to seven member ring;

R_3 and R_4 are independently selected from the group consisting of: H, R, ArR-, and where at least one of R_3 and R_4 is R and neither are ArR- or Ar, R_3 and R_4 together may optionally be a three to seven member ring;

R_5 is selected from the group consisting of: H, R, ArR-, and Ar;

R_6 is selected from the group consisting of: H, R, and ArR-;

R_7 and R_8 are independently selected from the group consisting of: H, R, and ArR-; and

R_9 is: $Z-\overset{O}{\overset{\|}{C}}-Y-$;

and wherein,

R is defined as a saturated or unsaturated moiety having a linear, branched, or cyclic skeleton containing one to ten carbon atoms, zero to four nitrogen atoms, zero to four oxygen atoms, and zero to four sulfur atoms, and the carbon atoms are optionally substituted with: =O, =S, -OH, $-OR_{10}$, $-O_2CR_{10}$, -SH, $-SR_{10}$, $-SOCR_{10}$, $-NH_2$, $-NHR_{10}$, $-N(R_{10})_2$, $-NHCOR_{10}$, $-NR_{10}COR_{10}$, -I, Br, -Cl, -F, -CN, $-CO_2H$, $-CO_2R_{10}$, -CHO, $-COR_{10}$, $-CONH_2$, $-CONHR_{10}$, $-CON(R_{10})_2$, -COSH, $-COSR_{10}$, $-NO_2$, $-SO_3H$, $-SOR_{10}$, $-SO_2R_{10}$, wherein R_{10} is a linear, branched or cyclic, one to ten carbon saturated or unsaturated alkyl group;

X is defined as a moiety selected from the group consisting of: -OH, -OR, =O, =S, $-O_2CR$, -SH, -SR, -SOCR, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, -NHCOR, -NRCOR, -I, -Br, -Cl, -F, -CN, $-CO_2H$, $-CO_2R$, -CHO, -COR, $-CONH_2$, -CONHR, $-CON(R)_2$, -COSH, -COSR, $-NO_2$, $-SO_3H$, -SOR, and $-SO_2R$;

Ar is defined as an aromatic ring selected from the group consisting of: phenyl, naphthyl, anthracyl, phenanthryl, furyl, pyrrolyl, thiophenyl, benzofuryl, benzothiophenyl, quinolinyl, isoquinolyl, imidazolyl, thiazolyl, oxazolyl, and pyridinyl, optionally substituted with R or X;

Y is defined as a moiety selected from the group consisting of: a linear, saturated or unsaturated, one to six carbon alkyl group, optionally substituted with R, ArR-, or X; and,

Z is defined as a moiety selected from the group consisting of: -OH, -OR; -SH; -SR; $-NH_2$; -NHR; $-N(R)_2$; $-NHCH(R_{11})COOH$; and $-NRCH(R_{11})COOH$, wherein R_{11} is a moiety having the formula: R, or $-(CH_2)_nNR_{12}R_{13}$, wherein n=1-4 and R_{12} and R_{13} are independently selected from the group consisting of: H; R; and $-C(NH)(NH_2)$.

2. The compound of claim 1 wherein Ar is phenyl, naphthyl, anthracyl, or pyrrolyl.

3. The compound of claim 2 where R_5 is phenyl, naphthyl, anthracyl, or pyrrolyl.

4. The compound of claim 1, ~~2 or 3~~ wherein R_3 and R_4 are independently selected from the group consisting of: methyl, ethyl, n-propyl and n-butyl; or, R_3 and R_4 together are selected from the group consisting of: β-cyclopropyl, β-cyclobutyl, β-cyclopentyl and β-cyclohexyl.

5. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-4~~ wherein R_1 and R_2 are independently selected from the group consisting of: H, methyl, ethyl, propyl, n-butyl, acetyl; or, R_1 and R_2 are joined and form a moiety selected from the group consisting of cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, and cyclohexyl.

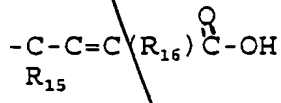
6. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-4~~ wherein R_1 and R_2 are independently: H, CH_3 or acetyl.

7. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-4~~ wherein R_1 is H, and R_2 is $-CH_3$.

8. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-7~~ wherein Z is: OH, $-OCH_3$, $-NHCH(R_{11})COOH$, or, $-NCH_3CH(R_{11})COOH$, wherein R_{11} is R, or $-(CH_2)_nNHC(NH)(NH_2)$.

9. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-7~~ Claim 1 wherein Z is OH or $-OR_{14}$, wherein R_{14} is a linear or branched one to six carbon alkyl group.

10. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-7~~ Claim 1 wherein R_9 has the formula:



wherein R_{15} is selected from the group consisting of: methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, tert-butyl, iso-butyl, and sec-butyl; and R_{16} is selected from the group consisting of: H, methyl, ethyl, propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, iso-butyl and sec-butyl.

11. The compound of claim 10 wherein R_{15} is isopropyl and R_{16} is methyl.

12. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-11~~ Claim 1 wherein R_7 is a three to six carbon, branched alkyl group.

13. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-12~~ Claim 1 wherein R_6 and R_8 are independently: H, or CH_3.

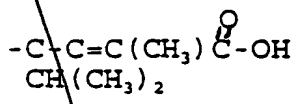
14. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-11~~ Claim 1 wherein R_6 is H, R_7 is: $-C(CH)_3)_3$, and R_8 is $-CH_3$.

15. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-14~~ Claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are each R.

16. The compound of ~~any of claims 1-14~~ Claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are each $-CH_3$.

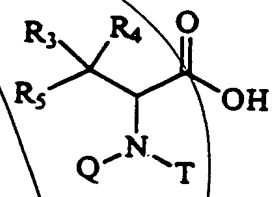
17. The compound of claim 16 wherein R_5 is phenyl.

18. The compound of claim 17 wherein R_9 has the formula:



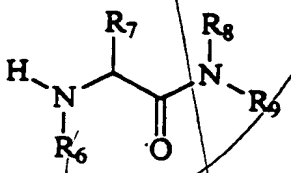
19. A method of preparing a compound as described in claim 1 comprising the step of:

(a) coupling an amino acid having the formula:



in which R_3 - R_5 are as defined in claim 1 and Q and T are selected from the group consisting of: R_1 and R_2 as defined in claim 1, and a protecting group;

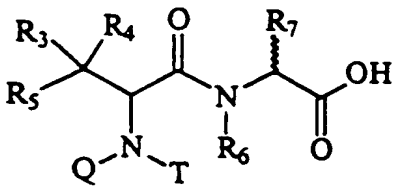
with a dipeptide having the formula:



in which R_6 - R_9 are as defined in claim 1;

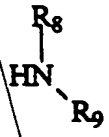
and, where Q or T is a protecting group, the additional step of replacing the protecting group with R_1 or R_2 to form compound I; or,

(b) coupling a dipeptide having the formula:



in which R_3 - R_7 are as defined in claim 1 and Q and T are as defined above;

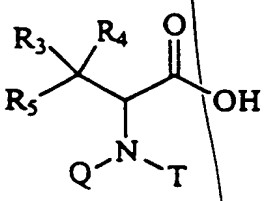
with an amino acid having the formula:



in which R_8 and R_9 are as defined in claim 1;

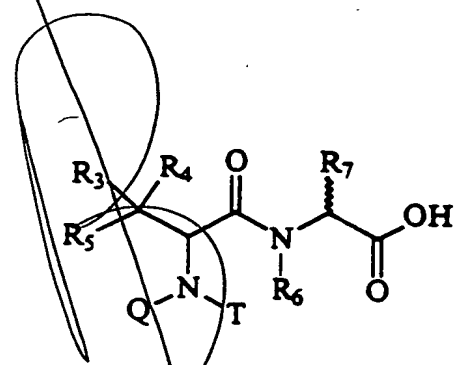
and, where Q or T is a protecting group, the additional step of replacing the protecting group with R_1 or R_2 to form compound I.

20. An amino acid suitable for use in the method of claim 19, having the formula:



in which R_3 - R_5, Q and T are as defined in claim 19.

21. A dipeptide suitable for use in the method of claim 19, having the formula:



in which R_3 - R_7, Q and T are as defined in claim 19.